



Pend Oreille County

Board of Commissioners

Karen Skoog
District #1

Mike Manus
District #2

Stephen Kiss
District #3

Rhonda Cary
Clerk of the Board

Phone: 509-447-4119
FAX: 509 447-0595
E-mail: commissioners@pendoreille.org

PO Box 5025
Newport, WA 99156-5025

June 21, 2016

Gayne Sears, District Ranger
Colville National Forest
315 N. Warren Ave.
Newport, WA 99156

RE: Coordination meeting regarding the LeClerc Grazing Allotment

Dear Ms. Sears:

We, the Board of County Commissioners, wish to express our sincere appreciation for meeting with us this week to discuss the LeClerc Creek Grazing Allotment in Pend Oreille County. Your willingness to participate in coordination indicates a joint effort in resolving the conflicts between our policies and the proposed changes to the management plan.

We would like to review the conclusions from the recent meeting of June 20th 2016.

- A new alternative will be added which will remove cattle from the LeClerc Creek allotment and NEPA will be done on Lost Creek and Lost Lake allotments with the possibility of restocking or permanent closure to the LeClerc Creek allotment.

We agree that NEPA should be done to ready Lost Creek and Lost Lake allotments for increased grazing as per our *Resolution 2015-45* which states that increased availability for grazing of livestock is in the public interest of Pend Oreille County residents and is to be continually sought after. This policy is backed by historic county policies of previous boards that supports grazing and economic development. This alternative does not provide for an increase but introduces a serious probability of a net reduction of grazing. Moving to a new allotment would place an undue burden on the permittee including the need to split up a herd and retrain the herd to new terrain.

- Alternative D will be revised with the USFS range specialists working with the permittee to resolve the issues which affected the functionality of this proposal for the permittee's business and improve protection of the watershed.

The permittee believes he is close to a plan that would work for his business with alternative D that will also protect the biggest environmental concerns. This permittee has become more familiar with this allotment in the last few years and has been willing to find solutions to the specific issues. Blanket management standards are not necessary when a plan is being worked with the range specialists. We believe this provides the best possibility for productive harmony and is a reasonable alternative.

- What parts of the watershed are functioning or not and what is the reason?

This question also applies to the Board's request in our original comments requesting more studies to be considered including the recent studies relating to watersheds and cattle developed at WSU and UC Davis. The precautionary principle is not appropriate in this situation. The easiest impact to mitigate is the only one that has management, but if it's not the actual cause then it is inappropriate.

We understand that District Ranger Sears originally stated the preferred alternative would be the new alternative E and retracted that statement pending additional data.

40 CFR 1502.2 EIS Implementation: The achieve the purposes set forth in Sec. 1502.1 agencies shall prepare environmental impact statements in the following manner:

- f. Agencies shall not commit resources prejudicing selection of alternatives before making a final decision (Sec 1506.1)*
- g. Environmental impact statements shall serve as the means of assessing the environmental impact of proposed agency actions, rather than justifying decisions already made.*

The Board of County Commissioners look forward to coordinating further with the Forest Service to protect our important watersheds and the future of grazing. When more information is available another meeting will be scheduled to review the data.

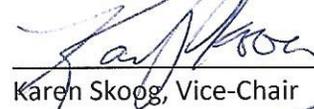
Thank you again for your time and teamwork with Pend Oreille County.

Sincerely,

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
PEND OREILLE COUNTY



Mike Manus, Chair



Karen Skoog, Vice-Chair



Stephen Kiss, Member

c: Rodney Smoldon
Steve Fountain
Shelly Short
Malcolm Friedman
Mike Poulson